

JESUS NEAR BUT UNRECOGNIZED

NO. 1180

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“But their eyes were holden that they
should not know him.”
Luke 24:16.*

THE Lord may be present with His people, and yet they may not be conscious of it. They may be conscious of the effect produced thereby, but not of the fact itself. When the Lord visited Abraham in his tent on the plains of Mamre, at the first, at least, Abraham thought he was receiving a wayfaring man, and so he entertained the angel of the covenant unawares. When the Lord appeared unto Jacob he rose up from the vision and said, “Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not.” Afterwards at the brook Jabbok, when the covenant angel wrestled with him, Jacob was not aware of the exact character of the mysterious personage, for he said, “Tell me your name.” He did not understand who it was with whom he wept, and made supplication, and prevailed.

The same is true of Joshua. He saw a man standing with his sword drawn in his hand, and he challenged him, mistaking him for a warrior, he did not recognize the person of his Lord until He said, “Nay, but as captain of the LORD’S host am I come.”

It is possible, then, for saints to be favored very remarkably with the presence of their Master, and yet for some cause or other they may not know that He is specially near them. So was it in the case before us, which let us consider.

I. We shall note, first, REASONS WHY, IN THE VERY PRESENCE OF THEIR MASTER, SAINTS MAY NOT KNOW THAT HE IS NEAR.

The reason in this case was twofold, first, because *their eyes were holden*, and secondly, because, as Mark tells us, *He appeared unto them in another form*. We must not suppose either of these reasons to be untrue, but that they are both true, and that the two evangelists have thus given us the whole of the truth, one taking note of one part of it, and the other of the other. The first reason, then, why these good men did not perceive the presence of their Master was that “*their eyes were holden*.” There was a blinding cause *in them*. What was it? We cannot dare to say. Where Scripture does not strictly inform us, it is not for us to dogmatize. By some mysterious operation, their eyes, which were able to see other things, were not able to detect the presence of their Master, but they thought Him to be some common traveler.

Still we are permitted to say that in their case, and in the case of a great many disciples, their eyes may have been holden through *sorrow*. They were very grieved for they had lost their Master, He was gone they knew not where. They would have been glad even if they could have found His body, but certain women had gone to the sepulcher, and though they told a wonderful story about a vision of angels, yet to these men it sounded like a knell in their ears, “for him they found not.”

Ah, there is no sorrow to a Christian like the loss of his Master’s presence. May you and I never be able to bear it with composure. “The days shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast.” Fast, indeed! There is no fast like that which sets in when those who have once seen the Bridegroom’s beauty, and tasted of the love that is better than wine, have to cry out, “O that I knew where I might find him!” That careless spouse who had slept and would not open to her beloved for a while, when her heart was touched and her innermost moved for Him, rose up and opened to her beloved, and searched through the streets of the city, for she could not rest until she found Him, and she made every watchman on the walls hear her question, “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”

Sorrow will unsettle the judgment. Even holy sorrow for sin, and grief for the absence of the Master, may sometimes put a mote into the eye and destroy its clear vision. Even tears of repentance have prevented men from seeing truths which might have made their hearts glad.

Again, in their case, in addition to the mysterious operation which held their eyes, which we do not attempt to account for, we have no doubt their eyes were holden with *unbelief*. Had they been expecting to see Jesus, I think they would have recognized Him. If they had gone to Emmaus fully persuaded that He was alive somewhere upon the earth, as soon as they had seen Him approach, they would at least have said, "Perhaps this is the Master, perhaps even now He is coming to us." They knew that His delights were with the sons of men, so that He would not long conceal Himself from His beloved while He was on earth, they knew also that He loved His own to the end, and would love them still, they might, therefore, have felt sure that He would come to meet them, and had they been believing and expecting, they would, probably, have discovered Him at once.

Whether it be so or not, I am sure, dear brethren, that our unbelief has often hidden the Lord from our eyes. What might we have known of our Lord by this time—what might we have tasted and handled of Him by this time if it had not been for our unbelief? He might say to some of us, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known me?" By reason of our unbelief we have not dived into the mysteries of His heart, we have not understood the fullness of His love. Oh, for more faith! Faith has the eagle's eye, it can see where other eyes cannot penetrate. Oh, for the eye of love! the dove's eye of love, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set, for faith and love together make up a blessed pair of optics which can see the Lord, even when clouds and darkness are roundabout Him.

Whatever may have been mysterious about the holding of the disciples' eyes, they were also somewhat holden by *ignorance*. They had failed to see what is plain enough in Scripture, that the Messiah must suffer, bleed, and die. They had their sacred books, and yet were so little acquainted with their real meaning that, albeit Christ is in every page of the Old Testament, yet they did not perceive Him there!, and so, not knowing that all this must be as it had happened, and expecting something very different, and more in accordance with the traditional views of their race, they did not recognize their Master. If it was not so with them it is certainly so with many of God's people. Some professors, I speak it with sorrow, do not know more than the most elementary doctrines of the Gospel. With the exception of knowing themselves sinners and Christ a Savior, they know nothing.

Justification, in the full glory of it, is hid from their eyes. The work of the Holy Spirit they do not consider, the fullness of the union of the child of God with Christ, and the glory that is to come thereof, which already casts a halo about the saints, they have not perceived. They do not study the Word so as to enter into its depths. They are afraid of some doctrines because they are said to be "High Calvinism," and of other doctrines because they are denounced as, "Arminianism." They are frightened into joining a party instead of taking the truth as God has revealed it, and beholding Jesus sitting upon the truth like a king upon a throne of ivory.

Beloved, the scales of ignorance have often holden the eyes of the saints, and it is well when the Holy Spirit opens our understandings to receive the Scriptures, and enables us to see Jesus Christ as He truly is in the field of the Word of God, like a precious treasure hidden therein. Thus Jesus may be with His people, but they may not see Him because of something in themselves.

At other times they may not see Him because of something in the Master. Mark, as I have told you, says He appeared unto them "*in another form*." I suppose he means in a form in which they had not seen Him before. The Lord Jesus Christ has appeared at times in the Old Testament to His servants, but on each occasion in a different form. To Abraham, who was a stranger and a wayfaring man in the land, He appeared as a pilgrim. To Jacob, who was a wrestler with his brother, He appeared as a wrestler. To Joshua, who was a soldier, fighting to conquer Canaan, He appeared as a soldier. To the holy children who were in the furnace He appeared as one walking amidst the burning coals. He puts Himself into fellowship with His people. So here the two travelers were overtaken by a third traveler, He appeared to them in that form in which they themselves were. As He is to make them like Himself, He begins by

making Himself like them. "As the children were partakers of flesh and blood, so he also himself took part of the same." Jesus condescends to our condition and our circumstances. There is no position into which providence may cast us but what Jesus can sympathize with us in it. We see Him best under certain characters when we ourselves are in that form of character.

Beloved, it may be you are a beginner in grace, and hitherto the Lord Jesus has appeared to you with a smile upon His face as a gentle Shepherd leading the lambs, but possibly for a while He is gone, or you think so, for you feel His rebuke in your soul, as if He were saying to you, "O fool and slow of heart." You conclude within yourself, "This cannot be Christ, I thought He was always a feeder of lambs." Yes, so He is, but He sometimes comes with a scourge of small cords to chase out buyers and sellers from His temple, He is the same Christ, only you have not before seen Him in that character. Perhaps you have only seen Jesus as your joy and consolation, under that aspect may you always see Him, but remember, "He shall sit as a refiner; he shall purify the sons of Levi."

When you are in the furnace, suffering affliction, and trial and depression of spirit, the refiner is Christ, the same loving Christ in a new character. Hitherto you have seen Christ as breaking the bread of life to you, and giving you to drink of the water of life, but you must yet learn that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge the floor of your heart. He is not another Christ, but He puts on another aspect, and exercises another office.

At first poor sinners are content to see Jesus as their priest who cleanses them from sin, they must go on to see Him as their King who conquers them by the sacred arms of love, and they must also know Him as their prophet, leading them into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. They must not wonder if He appears unto them in another form while they are learning more of Him, this kind of sacred philosophy comes by experience, for how often do we find precious children of God distressed because they have not today the same sweets they used to have.

At first we give little children such food as will be easily assimilated, they have nothing else but milk. By and by hard crusts are given them, for there are wisdom teeth to be cut. Suppose when we give them more solid food, they began crying out for the milk, again, should we give it to them? The Lord does not wish you always to be babes, He would have you grow into men in Christ Jesus, and though Christ is always your food whether He comes to you as milk or as meat, yet still He will not always be milk to you lest you should remain a babe. He means to be meat to you that your senses may be exercised, that you may be able to understand the stronger and deeper truths of the kingdom of God. Do not, therefore, be astonished, or if you are, let this always comfort you, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever," and though He may change the form under which He manifests Himself, yet He is the immutable Lord of love.

You have thus heard two reasons why saints may have Christ with them, and yet may not discern Him. First, because of themselves—their eyes are holden, and next, because of Himself—He may appear in another form.

II. Secondly, let us speak of THE MANNERS OF THE SAINTS WHEN THEY ARE IN SUCH A CASE.

When their Master is with them and they do not know Him, how do they conduct themselves?

First, *they are sad*, because the presence of Christ, if Christ be unknown, is not comfortable, though it may be edifying. It may be for rebuke, as it was to them, but it certainly is not for consolation. For joy we must have a known Christ. Saints are always downcast when Jesus is not known to be present, and as I have said before, may we never be otherwise than unhappy if our Lord be hidden from us. I can understand the child of God saying, "I am out of fellowship with Christ," but I cannot understand his saying that calmly and deliberately, without tears, without deep regret and intense repentance.

I can comprehend that the heir of heaven may walk in darkness and see no light, but I cannot understand how he can be at home in darkness. Set a bird of the day flying by night, and see how it flutters, and how uneasy it is. Go with a candle, if you will, to any place where a number of birds have made their nests, and see how strangely bewildered they are. The only bird that will be at home in the

dark is the owl, the bird of the night, and if any one of you can be happy without your Master you are of the night. If you can be content without the sunlight of Jesus' presence, depend upon it you are one of the bats of the cavern, you are not one of the eagles of the day. God grant us to be like these disciples—sad, doubly sad, if we do not know our God to be with us.

Next, these disciples, though they did not know that their Master was there, *conversed together*—a good example for all Christians. Whether you are in the full joy of your faith or not, speak often to one another. He who is strong will help the weak brother, if two walk together, if one shall trip perhaps the other will not, and so he will have a hand to spare to support his friend. Even if both saints are unhappy, yet some good result will come from mutual sympathy. The one is saying, "I have lost my Master," and the other replies, "I have lost my Master too," and they will both know that they are not the only persons in such a case, and that is some help to a man in sorrow. Sometimes even a gleam of light, such as will arise from the fact that another is in the same plight, may be useful.

Christian people, commune together, but let your communications always be like these which are recorded in this chapter. Speak of *Him*, talk of *Him*, what you know of *Him*, of your sorrows about *Him*, even of your neglects of *Him*, of your ill treatment of *Him*, your sins against *Him*. Talk of these things one to the other, for so long as they are about *Him* it will be good even to confess your faults to one another, for it will lead you to pray for one another, and to join your prayers together, so that there will be greater strength in the petitions, for if two of you are agreed, you know what power that sweet agreement has with heaven. "They that feared the LORD spoke often one to another."

A blessed practice, an ancient practice, an edifying practice, a God-honoring practice, one which so pleased God that He turned eavesdropper—came under the window to listen to what they said and took His notebook and recorded it, "a book of remembrance was written," and He has published it, and given His blessing to "those that fear the LORD and that think upon His name." Beloved, even if you are out of fellowship with Jesus, do not forsake the assembly of God's people. Though you may feel unworthy to speak with them, yet get among them, and perhaps there you will find your Master.

Note, next, that these disciples, in addition to communicating with one another, were *ready to be communed with by good men*. When this new pilgrim on the road came up and asked them a question, they were not shy, they were ready to give an answer, they poured out their hearts to Him, and He talked to them, and they were soon on the way to being instructed. It is well for Christians to be willing to receive the truth, not merely through their own immediate companions, but from others who fear the Lord, who perhaps may have looked at things from a different point, and who may have received clearer light. These two disciples were communicative.

It is a pity that Christian people so often shut themselves up within themselves. This is a particular fault of English people, you shall travel all over the world, in the same railway carriage with an Englishman, and he will not say a word to you. I am sure Christian people would get much good from one another if they would not be so distant. Many precious children of God have sat side by side by the hour together, and out of undue reserve, which they have thought most proper, they have failed to communicate, and have missed the opportunity of a sacred commerce of thought and experience which would have enriched them both. Be ready to communicate (not, of course, being indiscreet therein, for there is such a thing as casting pearls before swine), using a heavenly prudence, be free to speak to those who are willing to converse concerning Christ.

John Bunyan in his "Pilgrim's Progress" has a very witty and pithy piece about Mr. Talkative, who joined with the pilgrims, and if you remember, he would soon have wearied them with his chat, had not Christian and Hopeful adopted a capital expedient for getting rid of him. They would talk of nothing else but their inward experience in the things of God, and after a while Mr. Talkative dropped behind, that was not the sort of talk he wanted, and you will not long be troubled with the company of a gentleman who does not love your Master if you keep to the grand theme. He will soon be sick of you and go where his trashy wares are saleable, which they do not appear to be in your market, for you have better goods on hand. These good people were communicative to those who could sympathize with them.

Note, again, that though they did not know their Master was there, yet *they avowed their hopes concerning Him*. I cannot commend all that they said, there was not much faith in it, but they did confess that they were followers of Jesus of Nazareth. “We trusted that it had been He which should deliver Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day.” And they went on to let out the secret that they belonged to His disciples. “Certain women of *our* company made us astonished.” They were under a cloud and sad, but they were not so cowardly as to disown their connection with the Crucified. They were not so far gone in depression of spirit as to talk about the whole thing as though it were to be disavowed or concealed, lest anybody should say, “You were the foolish dupes of an impostor.” They still avowed their hope. And oh, beloved, when your comforts are at the lowest ebb, still cling to your Master. If I never get a smile from His face as long as I live, I must speak well of Him. If never again I see Him, yet is He the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

I like to see the strong retentiveness of many an almost despairing saint. I remember a minister who was talking to a poor bedridden woman who was under a grievous cloud, and she said, “Sir, I do not think I have any faith or any love for Christ whatever.” He knew better, for he knew what her life had been, and so, walking up to the window, he wrote on a piece of paper, “I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ,” and he brought it back with a pencil, and said, “Now, Sarah, sign that.” When she had read it, she said, “Oh, sir, I would be torn to pieces before I would sign that.” “Oh, but you said it just now.” “Ah, sir, but I could not put my hand to it.” “Then I suspect, Sarah, that you *do* love Him.” “Well, sir, whether I do or not, I will never give Him up.”

I remember visiting a woman, years ago, whom I never could comfort till she died, and then she died triumphantly. I said to her, “What do you come to the chapel for? what is the good of it if there is nothing there for you?” “No,” she said, “still I like to be there. If I perish, I will perish listening to the precious Word.” “Well, but why is it you remain a member of the church, as you say you are not a saved soul?” “Well,” she said, “I know I am not worthy, but unless you turn me out I will never go out, for I like to be with God’s people. I desire to be numbered with them too, though I know I am not worthy, for I have no hope.” I said, “Well, now, come, I will give you five pounds if you will give up your hope altogether,” and I drew out my purse. “Five pounds!” she said, and she looked at me with utter horror, “Five pounds!” She would not give Christ up for five thousand worlds. “But you have not got Him, you said.” “No, sir, I am afraid I have not got Him, but *I will never give Him up*.” Ah, there came out the real truth.

So was it with these two disciples, they talked as if they could not give Him up, though they were afraid that He had not risen from the dead, yet they remained His disciples, and spoke of “Certain women of our company,” they were half-unconsciously clinging to the forlorn cause in its very worst estate. And, beloved, so will we. We will say with Job—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”—

*“When our eye of hope is dim,
We’ll trust in Jesus, sink or swim;
Still at His footstool bow the knee,
And Israel’s God our help shall be.”*

But, passing on—these poor people, though very sad, and without their Master as they thought, were very *willing to bear rebukes*. Although the word used by our Lord should not be rendered “fools,” yet it sounds somewhat hard even to call them inconsiderate and thoughtless, but we do not discover any resentment on their part because they were so severely chided. Souls that really love Jesus do not grow angry when faithfully rebuked. Beloved, do you approve the sermon which cuts you up root and branches? Are you thankful for the ministry which smites your faults? Do you say to the Lord, as you bare your bosom to the sword of His Word, “Search me and try me”? Ah, then, there is something more in you than in the man of the world, for his proud heart rebels when his conscience is too roughly assailed.

I had, the other day some such conversation as this reported to me—a man and his wife had come to the Tabernacle. The wife said she liked to go to Church, her husband said he preferred to come here. What think you were the reasons for each choice? The woman said, “Spurgeon is too plain.” “That is why I like him,” said the husband. “He is too personal,” said the wife, “I do not think people ought to be talked to in that way.” “That is what we want,” said the husband, “we want to have it brought home to us. What is the good of our going where there is nothing said that really belongs to us?” That is just so. We do not want a Gospel that belongs to the people in the moon, but to ourselves. Some admire a preacher who can send a stone so high that it never hits anything, but we need a preacher who can sling a stone to a hair’s breadth and not miss the target of the conscience. Whatever deficiency there may be about them, those are right at bottom who can bear to be somewhat roughly rebuked by their Master.

And then, they were *willing to learn*. Never better pupils, never a better Teacher, never a better school book, never a better explanation. They were disciples, with Christ to teach them, with the Bible for a school book, and Himself to be the exposition, so they listened, while He went on to open up from Genesis, right through the Old Testament, the things concerning Himself. Poor child of God, are you in doubt and trouble? Still be anxious to learn of Jesus. Pray the Lord to enlighten you. Ask Him to teach you His statutes, and to open your eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law, for whatever God’s children may not be, they are a teachable people. They shall all sit down at His feet, and all receive of His words.

Again, dear friends, notice that while the two were willing to learn, *they also wished to retain the teacher and His instruction, and to treat Him kindly too*. They said, “Abide with us; the day is far spent.” They had been benefited by Him, and therefore they wished to show their gratitude to Him. Have you learned so much that you are willing to learn more? Are you of a teachable heart, ready to receive, with meekness, the engrafted Word? Now, I speak not of myself, for I have no cause to complain, but I have known true servants of Christ whom the people have driven forth from them because they were fickle and wanted a change, for change’s sake. They have not said, “Abide with us,” neither have they given them to eat, but though they have been worthy servants of God they have been thrust out not knowing where they should go, and their people not caring whither.

I believe that God resents these things, and that the unkind treatment of His servants will bring judgment upon the church. If He sends ministers with His message, He expects them to be treated with respect and kindness. Just as Moses said to Hobab, so wise believers say to God-sent ministers, “Come you with us and we will do you good, and you shall be to us instead of eyes, for you know where we should encamp in the wilderness; and as the LORD deals with us so we will deal with you.” These two disciples entertained their instructor, and would not let Him go.

And once more, though they did not know that their Master was with them, *they were well prepared to join in worship*. Some have thought that the breaking of bread that night was only Christ’s ordinary way of offering a blessing before meat, it does not seem so to me, because they had already eaten and were in the middle of the meal when He took the bread and blessed it. I think He did there and then set before them those dear tokens of His passion, which He bids us feast upon on the first day of the week, that we may show His death until He shall come. Whichever it was, whether the devotion proper to their own table, or the devotion proper to the Lord’s Table, they joined in it.

Now, it is a strong temptation of Satan with children of God to tempt them to stay away from the means of grace, because they are full of sorrow. Because they are in the dark the temptation is to keep away from the light, but oh, children of God, do not “forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Do not be tempted to stay away from the place where God has met you, and made the place of His feet glorious. Join still with the Lord’s people, and if your faith trembles, yet, nevertheless, come humbly to the table. Christ has not a table without doubts, else you might not come, He has not made it a table for those without sin, else you might not come, but He bids all His disciples come, you among them.

III. Lastly, let us try to set forth THE ACTIONS OF BELIEVERS WHEN THEY DISCOVER THEIR LORD.

“Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.” What then?

Well, first, *they discovered that there had been all along in their hearts, evidences of His presence.* “Did not our hearts burn within us while He spoke with us by the way?” This heavenly heartburn never comes to any but through the presence of the Lord Jesus. They began to look at one another, and say, “Ought we not to have known that it was none other than our great Teacher by the very fact that when we did not see Him our hearts were burning for Him?”

Now let me turn this text around a little. There is a poor sinner here who says, “Oh, how I wish that I could find the Savior, but I cannot find Him.” Why your heart is burning after Him. Who is it that makes you long after Him? Those strong desires are kindled by His sovereign grace. He is near you. “But I feel so much of the evil of sin! Oh, that it were rolled away. My heart cries, ‘Give me Christ, or else I die.’” Do you think that humanity unrenewed by grace cries in that way? Surely the Master is near you. There is already, if not a summer in your soul, at least a springtide. The ice is breaking up, the buds are beginning to swell, the sun is coming, and you are beginning to feel His glow. The Lord is not far from you, and one of these days when you come to look back upon it you will say, “I did not know it, but He was close to me. I said, ‘Where shall I find Him?’ and all the while He was close upon me.”

I now turn to the child of God. You perhaps have said, “I have lost communion with my Lord in that happy form I once enjoyed. But I can never be satisfied without Him, I could sit me down and cry my eyes out to think—

*“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed—
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.”*

Where does this kind of heartburning come from? From the devil? Then he has undertaken a new business. Does it come from yourself? Is that a sheep calling the shepherd? To me it looks like the shepherd seeking the sheep! But you say, “Oh, how I wish I could return to walking with God, abiding in Christ, and sitting under His shadow with great delight.” Do you desire it vehemently, passionately, as they that wait for the morning? Who made you desire it, do you think? Is He so far away where those strong desires are present? I believe not.

“Ah,” you say, “I feel in my soul that I love Him yet. I am afraid I have no fellowship with Him, but when I hear His name extolled, I say in my heart, ‘That is the sweetest music under heaven.’ When I hear my Master spoken well of, I wish I had the tongue of men and angels that I might speak of Him too. He cannot be too greatly extolled for me. I find tears in my eyes when I hear of His true love for sinners. Sometimes I am afraid I deceive myself, and am not a partaker in it, but still He is a precious Christ, and glory be to His name.” Do you think you would have your heart burning like that if He had quite gone? I think not.

You feel your heart burning for the conversion of others! You say, “Oh that we had a revival of religion everywhere, that the kingdom would come unto Christ, and the crown were set upon His head over ten thousand times ten thousand human hearts!” Your heart breaks for the longing that Christ may be glorified among men, and yet you say, “I am afraid He is not with me”? One of these days you will say, “Did not my heart burn within me? He must have been near.” You are blindfolded, and cannot see the fire, yet, if on a cold day you get very hot, I should think there must be a fire near you. If you cannot see Jesus to your soul’s comfort, yet still, if there is such glowings and burnings as these, He is very near you.

Sometimes on the Sabbath do you not know what it is to say, “Oh, my Lord and Master, the days are weary in which I do not see You, when shall I behold You face to face?” You have heard of the glories of Christ in heaven, and you have longed to peep through the keyhole, if that were all, that you might

see the King in His beauty, and you have cried, “Why is His chariot so long in coming?” You have often wished you could—

*“Sit and sing yourself away
To everlasting bliss.”*

Well, you may be sure the lodestone is not far off when the needle is so much moved. When your eyes are opened you will say, “Why, He was with me! He was with me! Did not my heart burn within me while He spoke with me by the way? My doubts and fears and trembling heart forbade my understanding how near the precious Christ was to me.”

The next thing they did was *to compare notes*. The one said to the other, “Did not our hearts burn within us?” It is always a good thing for believers to communicate their returning enjoyment. Somehow we are rather shy as to speaking of our joys. Ought we to be so? One does not mind speaking of his faults to his brother, for there does not seem to be any assumption in that, but if the Lord is very gracious I have known believers feel as if they could not speak of it lest they should seem to exalt themselves. We must studiously avoid everything like self-exaltation, but we must not rob our Master of a particle of His glory. If we have seen the Lord let us tell our brethren so, and say one to another, “Did not our hearts burn within us?” If you had a very dull and dry discourse you would get together and say, “Oh dear, dear! Our Sundays are dreadfully wasted now. We do not profit. The good man is so dull and dead,” and so on. You would be sure to say that, would you not? Well, when the Lord refreshes you, say one to another, “It was good to be there this morning. We had a feast of fat things. The Lord was with us.” Do not leave the table of spiritual bread till, like a good child, you have thanked your Father.

Once again. These disciples, when they saw the Master, *hastened to tell others about it*. It was the dead of the night, I suppose, by the time they knew their Lord. Our Lord Jesus had none of the prejudices of the High Church fraternity against breaking bread in the evening. That has always seemed to me to be the oddest of their freaks, that they will persist in contending that the Lord’s Supper ought to take place early in the morning. They ought not to call it a “supper,” they should style it a breakfast. I never could understand a certain class of Christians, great sticklers, too, for Scripture, who always will have the Lord’s Supper in the morning of the day, without any precedent, that I know of, for turning an evening meal into a morning one. I grant there is no importance whatever in the time, the only importance that I speak of is putting an importance on a wrong time, which those do who say it ought to be in the early part of the day. We say that whenever believers meet together they may break bread in remembrance of their Lord, if however, there is one time more like the first occasion, it certainly is the evening of the day.

Though it was late, the two disciples set off on a seven-and-a-half mile journey, in the dead of night, to tell others that they had seen the Lord. If ever you find Christ to the joy of your heart, go and tell His people about it. Ay, and tell sinners too, and put yourself to inconvenience to do it. Nowadays we are willing to testify if we can do it very comfortably, but I love to hear of those good brethren who will walk many miles on the Sabbath day to preach the Gospel, who are willing to sacrifice ease and comfort so that they may do good to others, just as these did.

Oh, for more enthusiasm in telling of the Savior’s love and hearing of it! We want nice cushions and very comfortable pews, don’t we, nowadays? When we were first converted we would stand anywhere in the crowd if we could but hear the Savior’s name. I remember when I would have gone over hedge and ditch to hear about my Master, or to preach about Him either. May our earnest love to Him never grow cold, and our enthusiasm never depart. May a midnight’s walk be nothing to us if we may but declare even to unbelieving brethren what we have seen of our blessed Lord. It is a good message, and it is a good errand to go upon, when we go to tell of Jesus, and it will bring good to our own souls.

I notice that while they told of their Lord’s appearing, *they made mention of the ordinance which had been blest to them*, for they especially said that He had been known to them in the breaking of bread. I like to see them mention that, for though ordinances are nothing in themselves, and are not to be

depended upon, they are blest to us. There is a tendency among us, because others make too much of ordinances, to make too little of them. Do not treat baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or the reading of the Word, or the hearing of it, in a slighting manner. If these are blest to you, bless God for them, and if God speaks to you through them, do not forget to say that they have been valuable channels of communication.

And now, dear child of God, I pray for you and for myself that we may always have our Master with us, and may know it, but if we do lose His recognized presence, may we act as these two disciples did, or better. May the Lord lead us on from strength to strength, and glorify Himself in us. If there is any poor sinner here who wants Jesus Christ, let him remember that his desire after Christ is an indication of the nearness of the Savior to Him. Christ is always within eye-shot. He cries, "Look unto me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." He is close at hand to every seeking soul. "If you seek Him He will be found of you." "Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." Trust Him and He is yours.

May Jesus abide with you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 24:1-35

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—766, 776, 785

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